

Identification Notes for wildlife law enforcement

CATEGORY: BIRD

Scientific Name/s: Columbiformes, Columbidae,

Common Name/s: Pigeons

Differentiating the Tail Feathers of Band-tailed Pigeons and Rock Doves (Feral Pigeons)

The Rock Dove, or feral pigeon, (*Columba livia*) is a non-native species that is not protected by the MBTA. The similar Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*) is a native species that is protected by the MBTA and subject to hunting laws. It is important to be able to distinguish the tail feathers of these species in the law enforcement context.



Both species have broad, squared tail feathers with a contrasting terminal band. However, in Rock Doves, the terminal band is typically black, whereas in Band-tailed Pigeon, the terminal band is tan, and is bordered by a black subterminal band.